

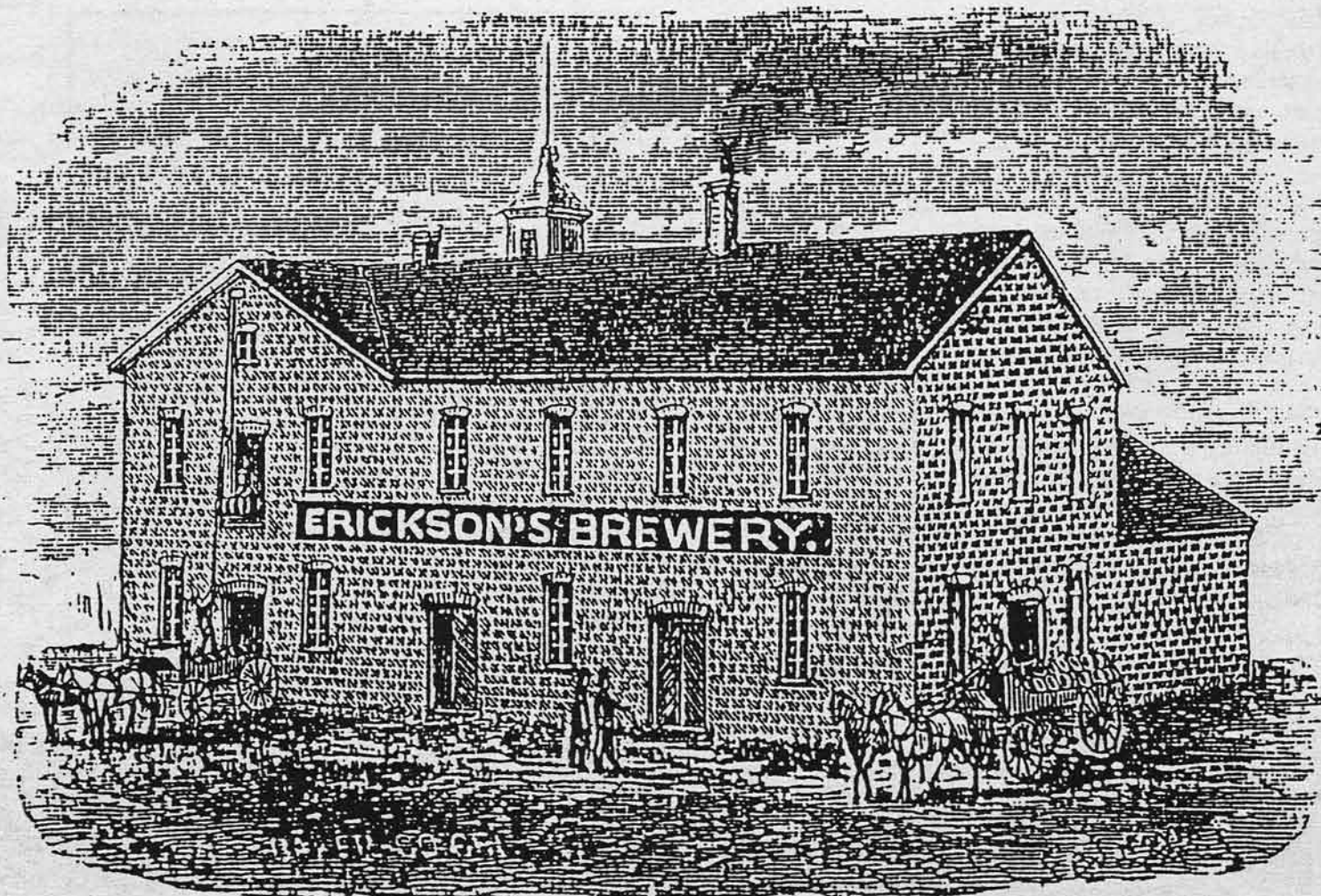
CLAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



CCHS Newsletter

January/February 1992

Vol. XV No. 1



BEER!! Clay County's only brewery (See Story Page 3)

President's Message



Dear Members,

Winter is only one-half over and I am ready for spring. I hope everyone is keeping warm by the fire. CCHS had a very fruitful 1991 and if all goes as planned we will have an even better 1992.

The CCHS Board and the HHIC Board have been meeting jointly for several months and things seem to be working out well for both groups. A new level of confidence is developing between the two organizations and the bond should get stronger as time goes on.

In December the Hjemkomst Center participated in a MAP Survey, short for Museum Assessment Program. It is to help the people involved with the Hjemkomst Center better utilize the assets available. If you have any questions about the survey, please ask the staff or board members.

The date of the annual meeting/banquet has been set for Thursday, April 2. We are currently searching for one new board member to be elected for a three-year term at that meeting. If you or anyone you know is interested in serving on the CCHS Board of Directors, please call Margaret at 233-4604.

CCHS currently has two temporary exhibits showing "An Ending and a Beginning" which commemorates the 1959 deaths of rock-n-roll stars Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and J.P. Richardson, and "Quilts and Other Comforts," which features the best of the CCHS collections' quilts, blankets, shawls, etc., dating from 1876 to 1988.

Stop in soon and often. Happy New Year!!

Sincerely,
Kelly Aakre, CCHS President

Give a Gift of "Memories"

CCHS can furnish photocopies
of newspapers for a special day!

Great birthday or anniversary gift!!
Call CCHS today - 233-4604

Newsletter now set with laser printer!!

Clay County Historical Society is now the proud owner of a new computer system! This newsletter is the first publication to be set and produced on the new computer and laser printer.



Eventually, as staff becomes more proficient with the new equipment, we will be able to computerize our collections and facilitate the production of exhibits and publications.

It will be a great 1992!!

CLAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



202 1st Avenue North
Box 501
Moorhead, Minnesota 58500

Board of Directors

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Lawrence Quam, Vice Pres. - Hawley
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Margaret Ristvedt, Editor/Publisher
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A colorful chapter in the history of Clay County

Moorhead's brewery

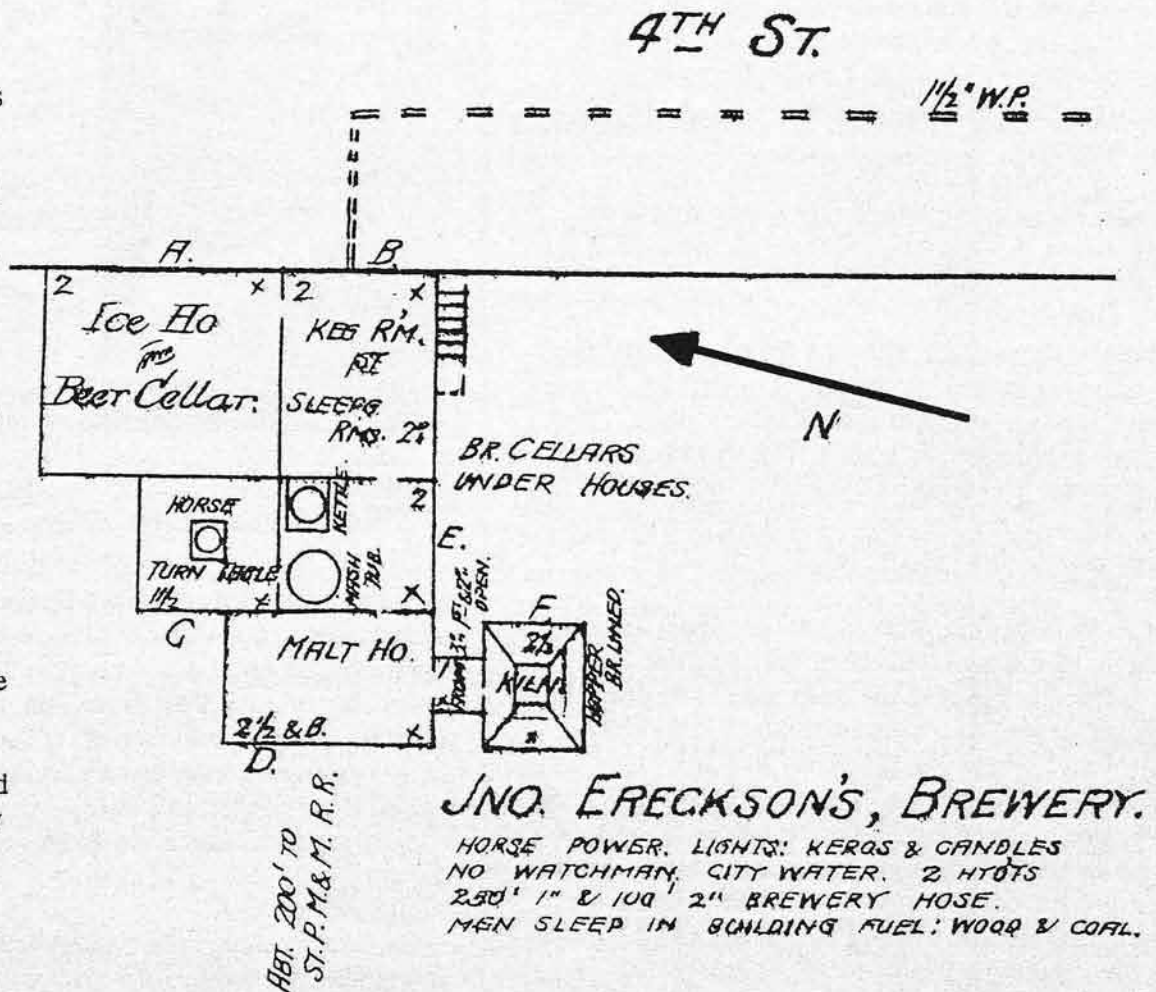
Many people have heard of Moorhead's Great Saloon Era. North Dakota closed all its saloons in 1890. Liquor dealers flocked across the river and Moorhead became a booze 'Boom Town.' By 1893, two railroad car loads of beer passed through Moorhead every day. Many folks don't realize that at least some of that beer was produced locally from local products. From 1875 to 1901 Moorhead had its own brewery.

In Spring 1875 Canadian brothers, Joseph and George Larkin, moved their families from Winnipeg to Moorhead. They borrowed money and built a 56' X 24' brewery about where the Riverfront Park tennis courts now sit, north of the old Great Northern Railway tracks.

It seemed like a good idea. Beer was a very salable product in frontier Clay County. Local barley and water were plentiful and Moorhead was a long way from breweries in southern Minnesota. A locally made product might do well.

Their brewing equipment arrived via steamboat from Winnipeg and in late May the Larkins brewed their first batch. Soon they had orders "for a goodly quantity."

But the Larkins had several strikes against them as we shall see. In less than a year their creditors foreclosed on their mortgage. Moorhead businessman and politician, John Erickson, wound up with the property. He produced his
(Cont. on Page 4)



In August 1890 Erickson's brewery was located in what is now Riverfront Park, Moorhead. Note the brew kettle, mash tub and "horse turntable" which provided power for the brewery's operations.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1890.

Brewery (Continued from Page 3)

own brew off and on until 1895. Then Ole Aslesen bought the plant and ran it until 1901.

Brewing is a fairly simple process. The brewer extracts fermentable sugars from barley malt, flavors them with hops and adds yeast which converts the sugars into alcohol and carbon dioxide. Only four ingredients are necessary: barley malt, water, hops and yeast.

Newspaper accounts indicate that the three local breweries (there were two in Fargo until prohibition shut them down) provided a market for area farmers' barley. Farmers raised the grain mainly for feed but brewers bought high-starch low-protein barley and malted it themselves. They first soaked the barley to make it germinate. This produced an enzyme which can convert starch into sugar.

Then they roasted the barley over a kiln to stop the germination and rough-ground the malt, perhaps at the Moorhead Flour Mill.

The brewer steeped the malt in a huge mash tub. The heat and water converted the starch to fermentable sugar and dissolved the sugar to form a syrupy sweet liquid called wort (pronounced "wert"). The wort was drawn off and saved. Newspapers mention a "pig yard in connection with the brewery." Erickson probably fattened pigs on the "spent" left-over grain.

The brewer boiled the wort in a large copper kettle for a few hours then added buds from the hop plant. The hops' bitter oils flavored the beer, gave it its distinctive aroma and served as a preservative.

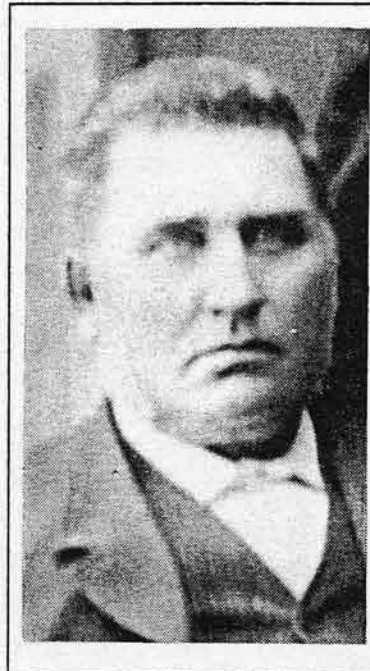
Growers in Wisconsin and later, New York, picked the buds in late summer and shipped them by rail to local brewers in 180 pound bags. Hops cost John Erickson up to one dollar a pound, so in 1883 he experimented by planting three acres into hops near his brewery.

The hop plant is remarkably tough to kill. The descendants of Erickson's plants may still grow around the site. (I have heard that hops do grow just across the river on the site of Fargo's old Red River Valley Brewing Company.)

Once the wort cools, the yeast is added to ferment the sugar into alcohol and carbon dioxide. Up to this point all beer is made pretty much the same way.

In late 19th century America there were two major types

of beer: lager and ale. Lager beer is fermented and aged at very cold temperatures for up to six months. Ale ferments at room temperature and is ready in days, but it spoils rapidly. Americans brewed only ale until German immigrants introduced lager in the 1840s. It took the country by storm. By 1875, nearly all American beer was lager.



John Erickson

Flaten/Wange Collection

This may explain the Larkins' problems. They made ale. They had to because they reached Moorhead in spring and were too late to cut the ice needed to make cold fermenting lager. Besides, it would have been fall by the time lager was consumer ready - past the prime beer drinking summer season. They probably planned to make and sell ale quickly through summer, cut ice in winter and produce lager for the following summer. They never got the chance.

Ale's short shelf life must have limited their market to the immediate area. Local consumers may not have appreciated ale and there might have been problems with quality. Moorhead's **Red River Star** gave the brew a rather back handed compliment: "[The Larkins' beer] by some is preferred to the impure article frequently shipped from St. Paul to country dealers. The pureness or genuineness of beer is not always to be found in its strength."

Erickson learned from the Larkins' mistakes. The first newspaper advertisement for his brew proclaims "Lager Beer - shipped to any point on the line of the N.P. Railroad."

The Larkins fermented their ale a few days, skimmed off the yeast, transferred it into tightly bunged kegs, and hauled them to the saloons.

Erickson's lager fermented several weeks in open vats in the ice filled cellars under the brewery. Erickson then strained his beer, transferred it to casks and stored (lagered) it in the coldest part of the cellar for three to four months. (Continued on Page 5)

Brewery (Continued from Page 4)

During this aging process brewers often added beechwood chips. Impurities stuck to the chips. This left the beer clear and clean - and flat. To add effervescence, brewers "Krausened" the beer - added still fermenting brew to the tightly closed storage casks. Fermentation continued and built up carbon dioxide bubbles.

When the market was ready workers "racked" the beer into kegs for saloons or bottles for home consumption.

The brewery's maximum capacity was 4,000 31-gallon barrels per year. In 1881, Erickson's brew master, German immigrant, Fred Wachsmuth, produced 1835 barrels (equivalent to over 25,000 of today's 24-can cases.) The business was seasonal at best. Six to twelve workmen prepared malt in late winter, brewed for the summer season and shut down in fall.

(Wachsmuth committed suicide near the brewery in September 1884 after being laid off. Erickson later hired Joe Jennister as brew master.)

Erickson's financial problems also kept production inconsistent. One of Moorhead's earliest residents, Swedish immigrant Erickson had many business interests. At one time or another he owned a large grocery, dry goods and furniture store, a meat market, several ice houses, the brewery, a saloon and two hotels: Erickson house and the Jay Cooke House. Erickson gained and lost fortunes as the local economy rose and fell.

Advertisement in 1899-1900 Fargo-Moorhead City Directory

ASLESEN'S BREWERY,

OLE ASLESEN, Proprietor,

MANUFACTURER OF

OFFICE:
ASLESEN'S SALOON.

Lager Beer,

MALT AND HOPS.

MOORHEAD, MINN.

After Moorhead's boom of 1882 collapsed, Erickson was in trouble. Creditors sold the brewery at sheriff's sales at least twice in the 1880s. Finally, in 1895, First National Bank of Moorhead foreclosed and evicted Erickson. He died in 1919.

The brewery remained closed until spring of 1897 when Norwegian immigrant Ole Aslesen bought it from the bank. Aslesen was an experienced brewer. In 1881, he and Charles Hult began a brewery near 2nd Street and 3rd Avenue North in Fargo. With prohibition in North Dakota Aslesen opened a saloon in Moorhead near the Main Avenue bridge.

Aslesen and his son, Albert, made improvements and kept the brewery running quite regularly until August, 1901. At 6:30 p.m. on the 30th, Aslesen and his son locked the brewery for the night and went home. At 10:55 a Moorhead policeman found the building blazing. By 11:30 Aslesen arrived to find his \$10,000 business a crumbled ruin. His insurance covered only \$3,000. Aslesen retired and commercial brewing in Moorhead came to an end.

Final 'Home Front' Lecture set for Feb. 2

The final in a series of lecture series supplementing the Fargo-Moorhead and World War II exhibit will be held on Sunday, Feb. 2 at 2 p.m. at the Hjemkomst Center, 202 1st Ave. N., Moorhead. Dr. Mike Lyons, of North Dakota State University will speak on "How WWII Changed America and the World."

Dr. Lyon published a book in late 1988 entitled "World War II: A Short History" and is currently working on a second book "A Short History of World War I" to be published in June of 1992.

In his February 2 lecture Dr. Lyon will examine how the power structure of the world was changed as a result of WWII. He will consider how the war reduced the "Great Powers" structure to two, the United States and the Soviet Union and how this led to a division of much of the world into power blocks. The lecture will progress to the later decline of the two superpowers as a result of the recovery of Japan and Europe.

Outreach Displays

	Opens
Hitterdal Senior Center	Feb. 12
Ulen-Hitterdal High School	Feb. 12
Viking Manor, Ulen	Feb. 12
Hawley Public Library	Feb. 12

Glyndon Community Center	Feb. 14
Moorhead Public Library	Feb. 14

A selection of RED RIVER LAND DOLLS will be on display at the Hitterdal Senior Center and the Ulen-Hitterdal High School. These character dolls created by Mildred Heifort of Moorhead tell the story of Red River Land and pioneer days in our area.

The display at the Viking Manor Nursing Home asks **WHAT IS IT?**

Will you be ready with your answers?



HEAVY METAL will open at the Hawley Public Library. This display features a selection of irons from our collections.

From hats and collars to shoes and stockings, a display entitled **FROM HEAD TO TOE** will be

seen at the Glyndon Community Center.

HAIR TODAY/GONE TOMORROW will be displayed at the Moorhead Public Library. This display looks at men's shaving tackle and women's hair care articles.



No. 4R5999 Sterling Silver Hair Brush, 7 1/4 inches long. Price...\$2.75
If by mail, postage extra, 6 cents.



No. 4R6000 Sterling Silver Comb, 7 1/4 inches long, to match brush. Price...\$1.25
If by mail, postage extra, 3 cents.
Can furnish set complete in box, silk lined. No extra charge for box.

Artifacts Donated

Artifacts received by Clay County Historical Society in November and December, 1991 include:

Artifacts include: Here-There-Everywhere, a school text book, school record book, and a measuring glass for medicine.

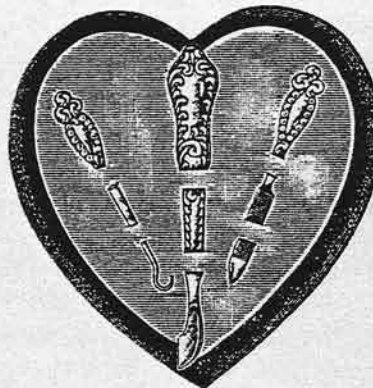
Donors include:	Moorhead:	Mel Johnson
	Hawley:	Mercedes Roos
	Lake Park:	Fred Kraft

New Members

Davis Anthony Scott, Moorhead
Vivian (Kragnes) Rossiter, Petaluma, CA
(Gift from Michael Rossiter)

Donations

American Bank & Trust, Moorhead
Concordia College, Moorhead
Red River Questors
Altrusa Club of Moorhead
Evelyn Gesell, Fargo
Stanley Langland, Belmont, CA
Pam Judnitsch, Moorhead
Katherine Mentjes, Waseca
Helen Rudie, Moorhead
Anonymous



No. 4R5893 Sterling Silver Boudoir Set, 3 pieces—button hook, cuticle knife, nail file.
Price...\$1.58 (If by mail, postage extra, 5c)....58c

1902

Sears,

Roebuck

Catalogue

Two areas music teachers perform Clay County residents participate at Chicago World Fair

By Pam Burkhardt - *Part 1 of a 3-Part Series*

The History of the Fair.

The 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, or World's Fair, was a tremendous show designed to commemorate the discovery of America by Columbus four centuries earlier. It was also an opportunity to display the progress and prosperity of this country. As one small part of the Minnesota exhibition, Clay County participated in a big way by sending officials, judges, entries and, of course, visitors to Chicago. Chicago was the closest an international exposition of any size had come to our area. Area residents took advantage of a train service that was readily available at reasonable rates.

A look at the Exposition itself

The idea of holding a quadricentennial began about the time of the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. Four American cities, New York, St. Louis, Washington and Chicago, were competitors for the honor. All four cities had powerful claims. New York was the chief commercial center of the nation. Washington was the seat of government. Both cities had the advantage of being more easily reached by European visitors. St. Louis was the center of population in the United States at that time having more people living within a 500 mile radius than anywhere else in the country. Chicago had the best facilities and boasted, quite rightly, that it had the best financial organization. By 1889, Chicago had raised \$5,000,000 in stock and pledged to double that figure to build the Exposition. Chicago also called herself a city of wonder, only fifty years old and home to a million and a half inhabitants! Philadelphia, having hosted the Centennial, kept out of the contest but gave its support to New York. In the vote in Congress, the eighth ballot showed 157 votes for Chicago, 107 for New York, 25 for St. Louis and 18 for Washington.

In 1890, a bill was introduced in the Senate to provide for the holding of the Exposition in Chicago. President Harrison signed it and it became an act on April 25, 1890. This act authorized an "International Exhibition of arts, industries, manufactures and the products of the soil, mine and sea." Commissioners would be appointed from the states, territories, Washington DC and at-large.

The buildings were to be dedicated on October 12, 1892 and the Exposition would open May 1, 1893 and run through Oct. 30, 1893. [An error in drafting the bill omitted the existence of October 31!] A naval review would be held in New York harbor in April, 1893 to welcome ships from all of the navies of the world. From this basic plan branched all of the major projects and minor details that went into the exposition. [above information comes from the 640 page official fair book - *The World's Columbian Exposition, 1893* pub.in 1893]

Clay County sends Officials and Judges to Chicago World Fair

The Columbian Exposition had an impact on Clay County even before the October 1892 dedication. George N. Lamphere, editor of the Moorhead Weekly News was a member of the Minnesota State Committee. He made several trips to Chicago and news about the Fair appeared regularly in his paper.

Marian White, wife of Moorhead real estate dealer Almond A. White, had been appointed "Lady Manager" for the 7th Congressional District in Minnesota. In 1892, her duties included visiting women's organizations to assemble examples of art, history and handiwork for the Fair's Woman's Auxiliary in Minnesota. She was also a hostess in the reception rooms during the Fair.

In April '93, the Moorhead Weekly News reported P. H. Lamb, farmer and Moorhead bank president, received his commission as a member of the Advisory Council of the World's Congress Auxiliary of the World's Fair on cereal culture. He would attend the World's Agricultural Congress in Chicago that October. The paper added "this is a good appointment."

Only two agricultural judges were appointed from the State of Minnesota and both were from Moorhead! W.H. Davy, a grain dealer, began his duties at the Fair in August 1893. The second judge was lawyer F.E. Briggs, chairman of the wheat committee and a member of its awards committee. Briggs had been appointed in July by Moorhead banker T.C. Kurtz, an alternate on the Fair's National Commission in Minnesota.

(Continued on Page 8)

World Fair (Continued from Page 7)

Clay County Music at the Fair

An article appeared in the September 29, 1892 edition of the Moorhead Weekly News seeking amateur musicians among the girls and women of Minnesota to perform at the Fair. A series of concerts would be given in the Woman's Building starting May 1 by "... amateurs who are possessed of the highest order of musical ability." Each candidate would first undergo an examination at the state level.

Two Moorhead ladies, Miss Bertha Darrow, daughter of

Moorhead physician, Dr. Daniel C. and Mrs. Darrow, and Miss Stella Demars passed their initial examinations in St. Paul in the spring of 1893. Miss Darrow, a piano teacher and excellent pianist, often joined Miss Demars, a soprano and music teacher, in concerts for and with their students. Clay County was well



Miss Bertha Darrow

represented at the fair since these two Moorhead ladies were two of only 19 Minnesotans who were eligible to perform at the fair's concerts.

Final examinations were held at the World's Fair site since those who passed would perform at the public concerts held there soon after. Miss Darrow left for Chicago at the end of August. Her rendition of Chopin's Military Polonaise was well received by the World's Fair musical examination committee and she performed her public concert on Sept. 14 in the Woman's building assembly hall. According to newspaper reports, she was asked to perform also on Oct. 13, 1893 - Minnesota Day.

It is not known what Miss Demars sang or when she performed, but she left for the fair around mid-September with her mother, Mrs. Demars of Hallock, and a brother, Gussie.

Join us for a party

Clay County Historical Society will hold its Meeting/Banquet on Thursday, April 2, at the Hjemkomst Center. All members, prospective members and friends of CCHS are invited to reserve that date and plan

on attending. There will be a program, election of Board of Directors and a wonderful meal. Mark it on your calendar now - April 2 at the Hjemkomst Center.



Pictured below is a copy of the title page from the official 1893 World Fair book.

THE WORLD'S COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION, CHICAGO, 1893.

BY TRUMBULL WHITE, AND WM. IGLEHEART,
World's Fair Correspondent. *World's Fair Editor of "Chicago Record."*

A Complete History of the Enterprise; a Full Description of the
Buildings and Exhibits in all Departments; and a
Short Account of Previous Expositions,
with an Introduction

By COL. GEORGE R. DAVIS,
Director-General of the Exposition.

And an Introduction to the Woman's Department

By MRS. POTTER PALMER,
President of Board of Lady Managers.

WITH SPECIAL CHAPTERS BY

HON. THOMAS B. BRYAN, *Commissioner-at-Large.*

PROF. F. W. PUTNAM, *Chief of Department of Ethnology.*

PROF. JOHN P. BARRETT, *Chief of Electrical Department.*

CAPT. J. W. COLLINS, *Chief of Fisheries Department.*

FREDK. J. V. SKIFF, *Chief of Mining Department.*

FULLY ILLUSTRATED

WITH HALF-TONE AND WOOD ENGRAVINGS AND PEN DRAWINGS BY
THE BEST ARTISTS

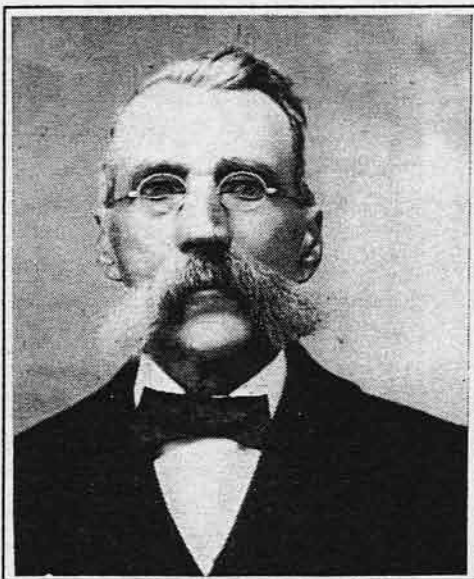
P. W. ZIEGLER & CO.,
PHILADELPHIA AND ST. LOUIS.

The 1992 March/April Newsletter article will explore other aspects of Clay County's involvement in the 1893 World Fair such as fair award winners from this area.

Hawley pioneer prolific inventor

By Jim Nelson

One of Clay County's most ingenious individuals was a transplanted Ohioan, David France. France, born in Ohio in 1827, married Lavina Snyder in Wayne County, Ohio in May of 1850. The couple lived in Wayne County until 1855 when they moved west via the railroad, then north up the Mississippi River to what was the beginnings of St. Paul. Just south of St. Paul, in Lakeville, France established that vicinity's first blacksmith shop.



David France

In 1869, the Frances moved to Farmington just long enough to call that town home before moving back to Lakeville. The family arrived in Clay County in 1878, residing in Cromwell Township. By then, all six of David and Lavina's children had been born, including a daughter born in the back of an ox-cart near Lakeville.

That France was very diversified is apparent from the census records from those years. In the U.S. Census Reports for 1850 (Wayne County, OH), 1860 (Lakeville), 1880 and 1900 (Hawley) France lists himself respectively as a gunsmith, a blacksmith, a farmer and a blacksmith. In the Minnesota State Census of 1895 France was listed as a blacksmith, but by the 1905 state census he had been promoted to a machinist.

France used his knowledge and skills from these professions to accumulate many successful U.S. patents and a number of inventions which were never patented but proved useful nonetheless.

A car coupling device used for coupling and uncoupling railroad cars and wagons was one of France's first patents in Clay County. It was patented on June 20, 1882. The February 10, 1884 edition of the St. Paul &

Minneapolis Pioneer Press states "France's life and limb preserving coupler was successfully tested in St. Paul yesterday. Among those present at the test were assistant President Winter and the Master Mechanic of the Omaha." The two men were so impressed with the new device that they loaned David a Omaha Co. locomotive for a week to run tests on the northern railroad tracks of Minnesota.

In May of 1890, France perfected a machine for cleaning flax that was second to none according to area farmers. Although he hadn't patented it yet, he charged farmers 10 cents per bushel to clean their flax prior to obtaining a patent for his "flax separator" on February 26, 1901. He went to Washington, D.C., according to the October 10, 1890 edition of the Red River Valley News, to take out a patent, but it wasn't until August 28, 1899 that the patent was filed. In August of 1904 France visited the World's Fair in St. Louis and brought along his flax-cleaner to show off. He also visited relatives in the area.

France received a patent for a unique safe on July 14, 1903. This contrivance, unlike other burglar-proof safes of the time was both burglar proof and out of view of any would be thief. This was made possible by lowering the safe into a well built under the safe, as deep as the owner needed. A sand-hopper was used as a triggering device for the safe, much like the sand running out of an hour glass. After the sand was emptied from one hopper to another, a lever was tripped which would allow for the unlocking of the safe from the bottom of the well. At that time, the owner could raise the safe by turning a handle which was connected to a chain and the safe would be ready for regular business hours. When closing time arrived, the sand-hopper would be activated inside the safe once again by the owner/worker and lowered to the bottom of the well. The owner could adjust the time of the safe's locking mechanism by simply increasing or decreasing the amount of sand.

To make entrance to the safe even more difficult, a foundation at the bottom of the well, built of brick, tightly enclosed the lowered safe. Scattered about inside the bricks were glass tubes of deadly poisonous gas.

A much tamer patent of David France's was a car starter, a device invented for the purpose of moving railroad cars by hand.

(Continued on Page 10)

France (Continued from Page 9)

France had many patents, some more important than others, yet at the other end of the spectrum, some of his non-patented inventions were also of great importance.

The "economical waiter" was not patented but was used exclusively by France and his family. It was a three-story tray used to serve meals. The tray, if used by the Frances, must have come in handy because they ran a restaurant/hotel in Hawley. France also made ballot boxes for the Hawley Township November 1892 election. According to the November 4, 1892 *Red River Valley News* "They are of heavy sheet iron, with a sliding drawer so arranged that the box is closed all the time."

Early in 1889, France invented a drum to be attached to a stove pipe, for more economical heating. Later that year he and his son Frank, also a patentee of some inventions, rented out a store in Hawley for making the stove drums. Prior to that, the two had manufactured the drums in Fargo because Hawley did not have the proper facilities.

Hawley's unique and well-liked inventor moved to Battle Lake after his wife's death in 1908 and shortly after that to Minneapolis. He died at the age of 93 on September 13, 1918.

Many thanks to Bill and Mary McNamee of Rogersville, Missouri for their valuable information on the France family. Mr. McNamee is a great-great-grandson of David France.

Copies of "safe" design submitted by David France for U.S. Patent:

No. 733,712.

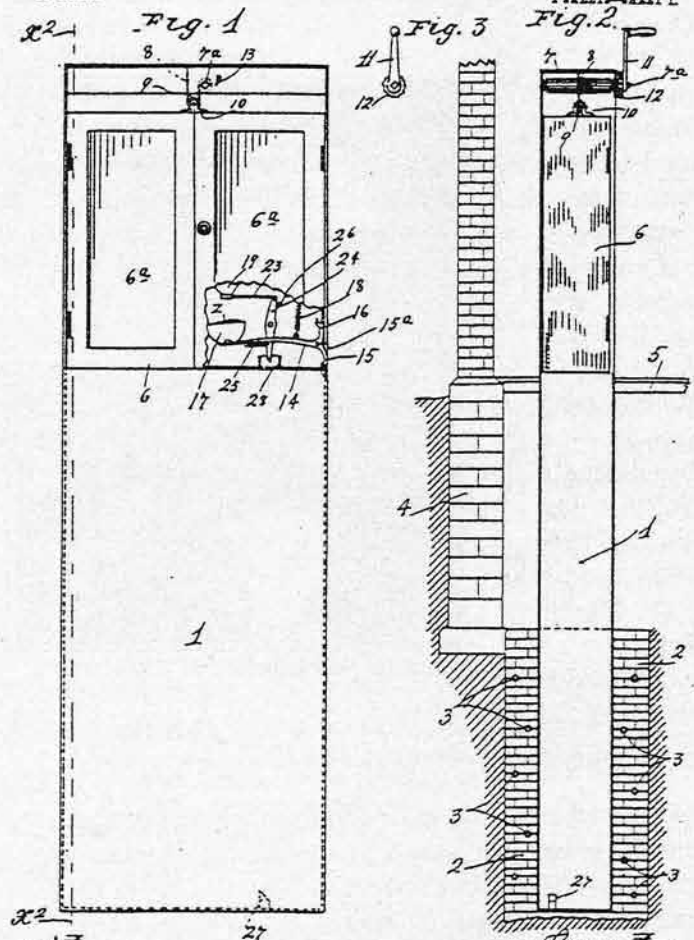
PATENTED JULY 14, 1903.

D. FRANCE.
SAFE.

APPLICATION FILED OCT. 17, 1902.

NO MODEL

1 SHEET-SHEET 1.



Witnesses.
A. H. Opsahl.
H. H. Hylton

Inventor
David France.
By his Attorneys:
William M. Merchain

No. 733,712.

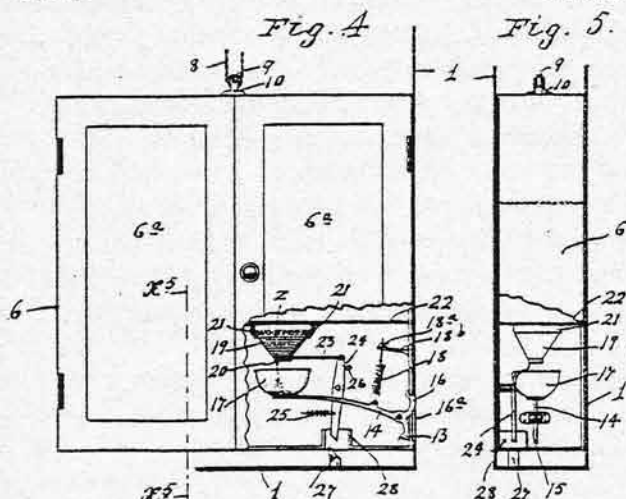
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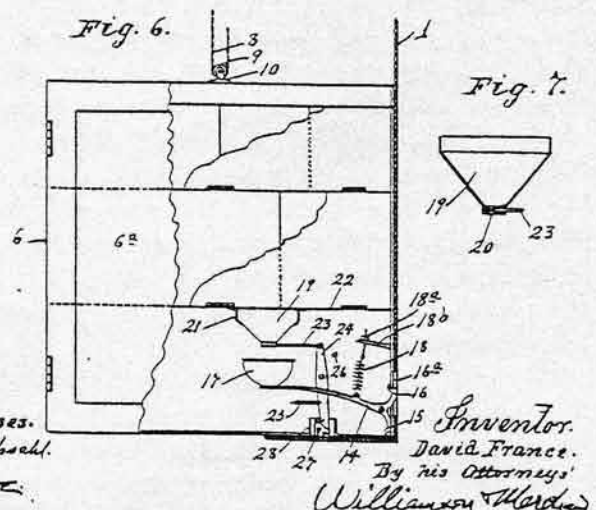
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Witnesses.
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H. H. Hylton



Inventor
David France.
By his Attorneys:
William M. Merchain

One Family's Story:

By Teresa Cascio

Nils Wiger was one of the earliest settlers in the Ulen area. Wiger was born in Beloit, Wisconsin on August 17, 1852 to Norwegian pioneers Nub Nelson Wiger and Live Holte.

His parents moved several times in an effort to find the best land. From Beloit the family settled in Fillmore County in southeastern Minnesota for a few years before joining a wagon train heading north.

Nub Nelson Wiger was 47 years old when the wagon train arrived at Audubon in 1871. With him were his wife, his elderly mother, and four children, ages seven to 18. The experienced pioneer bought 80 acres from the railroad.

If Nub had expected the 18-year-old Nils to help him establish his farm, he was disappointed. Rather than work on his father's land, east of what would later become Hitterdal, Nils headed north and west to begin work on a homestead of his own. When Nils turned 21 in 1873 he legally filed for the land he had been working for the past three years.

While he was waiting to legally own the land he kept busy. He built a dugout above the South Wild Rice River, a crude affair about 7X5 feet, shored up with trimmed tree trunks. This dugout was his home for six or seven years, and remained more or less intact until the 1930s when a cow, grazing innocently on top of it, fell through the roof. Today the dugout has been rebuilt by the present owner, who remembers the original from his childhood.

During these first years Nils worked for other men in order to earn money to buy seed. In the spring of 1872 he was reported to be plowing for Ole Ulen.

But Nils did not spend all his time working for other men. In 1877 or 1878 he built a log house and in 1879 he married the daughter of another area pioneer, Anna Skalet. In the same year he proved up on his homestead, an irregular quarter-section, now in Section 20 of Ulen Township. At that time there was no Ulen Township. On June 7, 1881, area farmers gathered at the Wiger log house and formed Ulen Township. Although he was not yet 29 years old, Nils Wiger's neighbors seemed to hold

him in high regard and named him Clerk of the township. Wiger would retain this respect throughout his lifetime.

Church records of the time are scanty, but it appears that Nils Wiger was one of several men interested in starting a church in the area in 1878. The South Wild Rice Evangelical Lutheran Congregation was established in 1879. In October of 1882 Nils was elected to the cemetery committee. From that date on, his name is mentioned regularly in church records. His name is mentioned several times as host of the church business meetings, as a secretary, deacon, treasurer, trustee, a member of pastor search committees and of building committees, etc. His wife and daughters were members of the Ladies Committee.

In 1921, Nils Wiger was one of those in favor of merging the South Wild Rice Congregation with the United Congregation. The combined church named itself Bethlehem Lutheran Church and it exists today, one of the oldest churches in Clay County boasting continuous use. The Wigers were members of Bethlehem Lutheran Church for three generations.

Almost as soon as Nils had proved up his homestead claim he began adding to it. He collected land as some people collect art. His first addition was a relatively small one, 40 acres in 1880 to join some of his irregular parcels of homestead land into a single block. This was followed in 1888 by the purchase of a quarter section of land that had been homesteaded by a pioneer family named Kopperdahl. Even today this parcel of land is still called the Kopperdahl Place. Another piece of land added to the Wiger Farm was the "Tatley 80," 80 acres bought from a family named Tatley. Nils continued to accumulate property until in 1916, with the last purchase recorded, he owned over 500 acres.

As his acreage grew so did his family. He and his wife had eight surviving children, three boys and five girls. When the little log house couldn't hold any more children it was decided to build a regular two story board house, completed in 1892. The last child, Alfred, was born that same year and there is some debate in the family as to whether Alfred was born in the log house or the new house.

(Continued on Page 13)

What's in the Archives?

By Mark Peihl

This is the second in a series of articles describing research materials available at the Clay County Historical Society Archives.

"I know my great-grandparents lived in Fargo-Moorhead around 1900. Can you tell me anything about them?"
"I'm researching my house in south Moorhead. Can you tell me approximately when it was built?" "How many saloons were in Moorhead in 1898?"

At least partial answers to all these questions and many more can be found by searching the CCHS' Fargo-Moorhead city directories. The directories are a lot like phone books but include much more information. CCHS has a nearly complete set dating from the 1880s to the present. We don't know of directories for other Clay County cities, but for genealogists whose ancestors lived in Fargo or Moorhead these volumes can be a gold mine.

In the 1870s both Moorhead and Fargo were quite small. Everyone knew everyone else and where they lived. But as the cities grew out of town salesmen needed to contact potential clients, visitors wanted to find hotels and businesses, bill collectors and others sought out individuals. A need for some sort of directory grew.

In 1881 hotel clerk C.E. Nichols and newspaper reporter C.T. Abbott completed a door to door canvas of Fargo and published their findings as "Abbott & Nichols' Fargo City Directory for 1881." It was a success. New editions appeared annually through at least 1887. Moorhead listings were added in 1884.

These early directories include an alphabetical listing of the name of each business or householder and his or her occupation and address.

After 1882 a commercial directory, organized by type of business was added; (a sort of mini yellow pages). This basic information is still recorded in today's directories. Other helpful features have been added over the years.

From 1891 through 1927 Pettibone Directory Company of St. Paul issued F-M Directories about every other year. They added the listed person's employer and the names of widows' deceased husbands.

Until 1902 Moorhead had no house numbers. Addresses were a bit strange.

A typical entry from 1893:

Spotts Wm L, Cond GNRy
Res e s 9th 2 s Conie Ave.

Translation:

William L Spotts, Conductor for the
Great Northern Railway, Residence east
side of 9th, two houses south of Conie
Avenue.

In 1910 the short lived Fargo-Moorhead Directory Company issued one volume with a very convenient feature - businesses and citizens listed by their street addresses.

In 1928 the R.L. Polk Company of Minnesota took over from Pettibone. Polk brought back the street by street listings and added another helpful feature - the new address for residents who had moved out of Fargo-Moorhead since the last directory came out. Polk also covered West Fargo.

Unfortunately, during World War II Polk dropped the "forwarding address" feature but listed area servicemen and women and their branch of service.

In 1951 Western Directory Company began competing with Polk. Both companies published annual volumes through 1967 when Western disappeared. Western added separate entries for students at area colleges and Polk listed all Cass and Clay County farmers. Both listed residents by their telephone number. After 1957 children under 18 and their ages are included.

Genealogists generally pick a volume, look up their ancestor, then work backwards and forward through the directories until he is no longer listed. This provides a time frame for when the ancestor live in Fargo-Moorhead. One can learn more, however. The ancestor's occupation and address and how they change over years can provide insights into the family's history, its upward (or downward) mobility. Boarders staying with householders often turn out to be in-laws or other relatives. The family home may still be standing.

Other researchers use the directories as well. Students studying community development, businesses or neighborhoods find them valuable. House owners can use the 1910 and post-1928 street by street listings to see

(Continue on Page 13)

Wigers (Continued from Page 11)

The foundations of the log house are still faintly discernable today, not far from the board house which is still in use. The new house was not large, but the Wigers managed to crowd as many as 15 people into its five tiny bedrooms.

Anna Skalet Wiger died in 1918. Nils Wiger moved into Ulen with his spinster daughter Hannah as housekeeper. He left his sons, Alfred and Oliver, to run the farm. His third son, Ned, was fighting in France. Later that year Ned would be hit by shrapnel and sent home. In 1919, Nil's son Alfred married Jessie Sirjord, a schoolteacher from Norman County. Alfred continued working the Wiger Farm until his father's death in 1935. The farm is now owned by Nil's grandson, Conrad Nels Wiger, the son of Alfred and Jessie.

Nils is still remembered and respected today as the patriarch of the Wiger family.

Waaen interns at CCHS

Karen Waaen, a Concordia College student from Hudson, Wisc., is interning at Clay County Historical Society this winter. Waaen, a history and political science major, said her advisor at Concordia recommended CCHS. Waaen says she "enjoys research" and is interested in learning more about museums and the historical societies' day-to-day operations.

Waaen, who is currently cleaning glass plate negatives from CCHS's Flaten/Wange Collection, is searching for ideas for a specific museum project she can complete before her internship ends.

From the Heritage Shop --

Having a Family Reunion??

Take along the new board game LifeStories. The game helps family members get to know each other because each player has to answer the question printed on the card he draws when landing on a given spot. It's a game all about moments, memories, - life!

Also available in the Gift Shop -

- Giftware
- Educational Toys
- Books, including
 - Roy Johnson's
 - The Red River Valley &
 - Bob Brekken's
 - Journey Back to Hawley

Heritage Hjemkomst Interpretive Center
202 1st Avenue North, Box 157
Moorhead, MN 56560
(218) 233-5604

Visa/Mastercard Accepted



PIANO WANTED

The Center's "staff" will "b flar" until we can get "A sharp" set of "ivories" for the Center, and this would be "treble!" Translation: The Center is in need of a used piano in good condition! If you are interested in donating a piano, please contact the Center at 218-233-5604 and ask for Bev.

Many snugly mittens were for sale in the 1902 Edition of the Sears, Roebuck Catalogue.

Men's Heavy Wool Mittens.



No. 33R666
Men's Heavy
Weight Knit
Wool Mittens;
fancy striped pat-
terns, dark col-
ors, large sizes.
Price, pair...\$0.13
Per dozen... 1.56

If by mail, postage extra, per pair, 4 cents.

Men's Heavy Wool Shooting Mitten.



No. 33R672 Men's
Heavy All Wool
One Finger Shoot-
ing Mitten. Fullest,
very warm and
seamless, will wear
like leather. Black
or brown.

Price, per dozen, \$3.00; per pair...25c
If by mail, postage extra, per pair, 5 cents.

Northwest Heavy Wool Mittens.



No. 33R678 Men's
Extra Heavy
Thick Mackinaw
Wool Mittens.
Will wear like
leather. Very firm,
thick mitten. Dark
colors.

Price, per dozen, \$4.20; per pair...35c
If by mail, postage extra, per pair, 9 cents.

Archives (Continued from Page 12)

who lived in their house and find clues as to when it was built. It is possible to search through the older directories page by page for a particular address, occupation or other information, but it is time consuming (about 45 minutes to an hour for each year.)

As with most old records, misspelling and omissions are common, especially with the early directories.

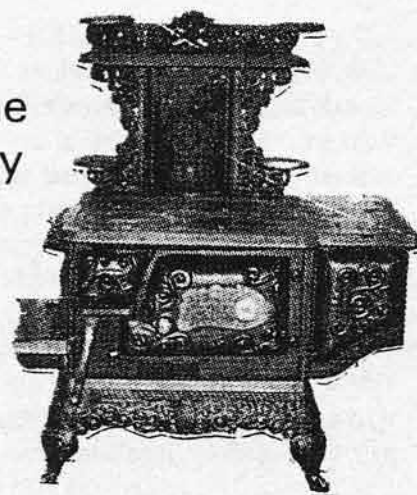
(Omissions still happen. In preparing for this article I looked myself up in the directories. Sure enough, the Polk canvases missed me several times in the 1980s!

CCHS is still missing the 1924 Pettibone Directory and the 1967, 1968, 1987 and 1988 Polk Directories. If you happen to have any of these issues we'd love to add them to the collection.

CLAY COUNTY MUSEUM

* Permanent Exhibit

Unique characterizations of one facet of the history of each county town. Together they form a chapter in the overall history of Clay County.

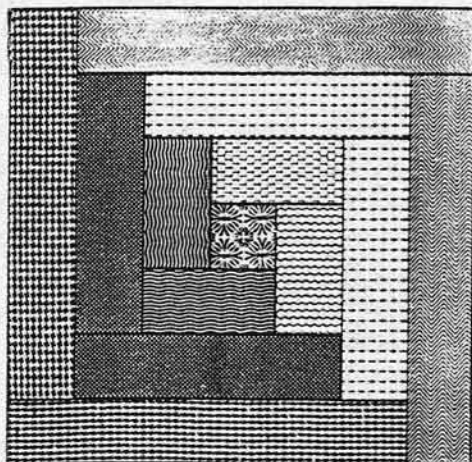


* Temporary Gallery "An Ending & A Beginning"

An exhibit commemorating the 1959 deaths of rock-n-roll stars Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and J.P. Richardson, who were on their way to play a concert at the Moorhead Armory when their plane crashed. Fargoan, Robert "Bobby Vee" Veline, began his career by filling in for the missing stars.

"Quilts and Other Comforts"

The best of our collections' quilts, coverlets, blankets, shawls, wall hangings and lap robes, illustrates how comfort was defined in the "good-old-days." Quilts on display date from 1876 to 1988.



Log Cabin quilt block

*Make plans to visit
the
Clay County Museum today!!
Hours are: 9-5 Mon.-Sat.,
9-9 Thurs. and 12-5 Sun.*

Do you believe that:

The Wright Brothers designed the first airplane --

The tank was conceived in World War I --

The Gatling Gun was the first machine gun --

??

Wrong! These and many other inventions by Leonardo da Vinci (the famous artist who painted such works as "Mona Lisa" and "The Last Supper") were first conceived just about the time Christopher Columbus was stubbing his nautical toe on the American continent while hunting for the Indies. And that nag-frightener, the horseless carriage of the 1890s, has to take a back seat too, because Leonardo designed the first mechanical car.

Visit the Hjemkomst Center's new exhibit, "Leonardo da Vinci - The Inventor" from February 22 through June 7 and experience the wonderment of a man ahead of his time! Though famous for his paintings, most people are not aware of his technological genius for designing inventions. Using mathematical principles which Leonardo believed were the key to all knowledge, he explored such areas as anatomy, astronomy, botany, zoology, geology, flight, water and landscape. Although five centuries have passed, Leonardo is still viewed with awe and many of his dreams have become reality. His visions can now be experienced by people today.

Developed by IBM, this intriguing exhibit contains 24 working models recreated from sketches of aeronautic, mechanical and hydraulic devices made of wood, brass and bronze. The models will be displayed or suspended from the ceiling and can be manipulated by visitors. Also on view will be three architectural models taken from Leonardo's sketches -- St. Peter's Church, The Royal Stable and The Stair Facade. The exhibit includes a 60 minute video presentation "I, Leonardo: A Journey of the Mind" starring Frank Langella as Leonardo da Vinci.

The models, based on Leonardo's sketches, drawings and notebook recordings, were first built in Milan in 1938. In 1940, the Italian Ministry of Popular Culture loaned the exhibition to the New York Museum of Science and Industry. In 1951, IBM commissioned recreations of the original models and began touring the exhibition all over the world.

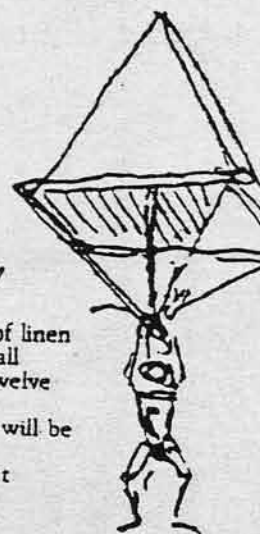
Along with the exhibit, the Center will offer an Educational Program which will include a teacher's preview reception on February 20 from 3-6 p.m., guided school tours on Tuesdays, Wednesday and

Thursdays at 9, 10:30, Noon and 1:30 beginning March 3, supplementary educational materials, and a tabloid, "Inventors, Inventing, Inventions," produced by The Forum's Newspaper in Education Program. Scheduled are several public programs: a showcase of North Dakota and Minnesota Inventors on March 21 and 22, the Metro Invention Convention April 23 and \$5 Family Days April 25 and 26 featuring the student inventions from the Convention.

The schedule is subject to change. For more information call (218) 233-5604.

Parachute.

"If a man have a tent made of linen of which the apertures have all been stopped up, and it be twelve braccia across and twelve in depth," Leonardo wrote, "he will be able to throw himself down from any great height without suffering any injury."



Pratt teaches museum class

Claudia Pratt, Program Coordinator for the Hjemkomst Center, is teaching an Introduction to Museum Studies course at North Dakota State University winter quarter for the second straight year. The course covers the history of museums, the variety of non-teaching careers available in the museum field, and the preparation those careers require. Practical aspects of working in a museum are an integral part of the course.

CCHS staffers, Mark Peihl and Pam Burkhardt, will be among area guest speakers for the class. Special speaker will be Viki Sand, Director of the Shaker Museum of Old Chatham, NY.

Peihl and Burkhardt will provide a guided tour of the Clay County Museum and Archives.

CCHS - 1991 MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

I would like to begin/renew my membership in the Clay
County Historical Society. Please enter my membership
in the category I have checked below:

() INDIVIDUAL \$15.00

() FAMILY \$35.00

CCHS MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

** FREE Admission to the Center
 ** Bi-Monthly Newsletter
 ** 25% Discount on Photo Reproductions
 ** 10% Discount on Acid-Free Materials
 ** Voting Privileges
 ** Invitation to the Annual Meeting/Dinner
 and all CCHS Events

NAME: _____

ADDRESS:

PHONE: _____

Please list family members.

Husband	Wife
---------	------

Children (under the age of 18)

Return to: Clay County Historical Society
P.O. Box 501
Moorhead, MN 56561

(218) 233-4604

CLAY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Non Profit Organization
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MOORHEAD, MN

202 1ST AVENUE NORTH

Box 501

MOORHEAD. MINNESOTA 56560